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Abbreviations and Acronyms

| | |
|---------------|--|
| AUM | Animal Unit Month |
| BLM | Bureau of Land Management |
| EIS | Environmental Impact Statement |
| GIS | Geographical Information System |
| GPS | Global Positioning System |
| NOLS | National Outdoor Leadership School |
| OHV | Off Highway Vehicle |
| RAMP | Recreation Area Management Plan |
| RMP | Recreation Management Plan |
| ROS | Recreation Opportunity Spectrum |
| RPP | Recreation Project Plan |
| SRMA | Special Recreation Management Area |
| USDI | United States Department of the Interior |
| USFS | United States Forest Service |
| USFWS | United States Fish and Wildlife Service |
| VRM | Visual Resource Management |
| WGF | Wyoming Game and Fish |
| WSA | Wilderness Study Area |
| WYOBCH | Wyoming Back Country Horsemen |

1.0 Introduction

The Scab Creek Recreation Site is located at elevation 8,200 feet in western Wyoming, at the foot of the Wind River Mountains in the Upper Green River Basin. The Scab Creek trailhead, a joint effort with the United States Forest Service (USFS), provides primary access to the adjacent Bridger Wilderness - one of the highest quality wilderness areas in the continental United States.

The Bridger Wilderness contains 428,169 acres of forests, tundra, lakes, streams, and 48 mountain summits higher than 12,000 feet. The area has over 500 miles of trails for hikers, backpackers, anglers, and stock users. The area lies adjacent to the Continental Divide and encompasses the Western Slope of the Wind River Range. The USFS manages the Bridger Wilderness for the preservation of its natural characteristics and minimal human impact on the landscape.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administers the Scab Creek Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA), and also maintains an access road into the area. The SRMA is approximately 18,461 acres and is being managed as a proposed wilderness area with trailhead related facilities. It is not part of the Bridger Wilderness, which is to the north and east of the SRMA. The Scab Creek Recreation Site is located in the northern part of the SRMA. However, the Scab Creek trailhead provides one of the primary southern entrances into the Bridger Wilderness.

The Wilderness Study Area (WSA) is located within the SRMA and includes 7,636 acres. The Scab Creek Recreation Site is not part of the WSA. However, the WSA abuts the site on its eastern side and part of its northern edge. While the Scab Creek Recreation Site does not have actual defined boundaries, it is approximately 385 acres in size, or 2% of the SRMA.

1.1 Relationship to Approved Recreation Area Management Plan

There is no Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP) for this area. The Scab Creek SRMA is comprised of the Scab Creek Wilderness Study Area (WSA), elk feedground, trailhead, campground and associated undeveloped BLM administered land. This area has been addressed in the current Pinedale Resource Management Plan (RMP) as follows:

Wilderness Resources

The Scab Creek WSA has been evaluated in a previous wilderness environmental impact statement (USDI, 1981). As a result of this analysis, the BLM recommended the Scab Creek WSA for designation as wilderness. This designation is pending further processing and congressional decision. The WSA is managed in conformance with the policy and guidance outlined in the BLM Manual H-8550-1, Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review. The Scab Creek Recreation Site is located entirely outside the boundaries of this WSA.

Recreation Management

The Pinedale RMP Recreation Management Objective is as follows:

"Recreation values will be managed to accommodate existing uses, prevent or mitigate environmental degradation resulting from recreation and other uses, and provide for the anticipated recreation uses and use levels in the resource area."

The RMP also states:

"Management emphasis will be placed on the current recreation management areas including Scab Creek, the Green and New Fork rivers, Oregon Trail routes, and Boulder Lake."

And:

"Recreation facilities will be installed where needed to accommodate the anticipated recreation uses and use levels and to provide for adequate public health and safety."

And:

"Recreation management for the Scab Creek area, the Green and New Fork rivers, and the Oregon Trail routes will emphasize maintaining or improving the quality of the sites and the recreation experience."

Off-Road Vehicle Management

The 7,636-acre Scab Creek WSA is designated as "closed" to off-highway vehicles (OHVs) year round for the protection of wilderness resources. In addition, OHV use is limited to existing roads and trails for lands outside the WSA. The Scab Creek Recreation Site and elk feedground are closed to OHV use and unauthorized human presence from November 15 through April 30.

Forest Management

The Pinedale RMP states:

"Forest management activities will be excluded from the Franz and Scab Creek elk feedground, except for salvage and sanitation harvests when necessary to maintain the integrity of the feedground environment to benefit the elk."

And:

"Other than for emergency salvage of damaged or dead trees and for public protection, no forest product harvesting will be allowed in the Scab Creek campground. Campers will be allowed to obtain firewood from designated areas."

In addition, the sale of forest products (sawtimber, firewood, Christmas trees, posts, poles, and wildlings) is prohibited within the 7,636-acre Scab Creek WSA.

Rangeland Management

Allotment 2153, which currently has 607 existing Animal Unit Months (AUMs) and covers the Scab Creek area, is categorized as "T", or Improve. This category provides for prioritizing allotments in this category based on resource conflicts, resource condition, and opportunities.

Minerals Management

The 7,636-acre Scab Creek WSA area is closed to geophysical activities and also closed to oil and gas leasing. The Scab Creek WSA is one of the few areas within the Pinedale Field Office planning area that is currently closed to oil and gas leasing.

Visual Resources

The Scab Creek WSA has a designation of Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class 1, while the remainder of the Scab Creek SRMA is designated VRM Class 2. This VRM Class 2 area contains the elk feedground, trailhead and campground area.

Access

Access to the Scab Creek Recreation Site is from Wyoming Highway 353 and through private and BLM-administered land on BLM road #5423. Access is provided to the area for the benefit of recreation use, rangeland management, and wildlife resources.

1.2 Project Objectives and Justification

Through the implementation of this project plan, it is the BLM's intention to improve the quality of recreation experience, public health, safety and welfare at the Scab Creek Recreation Site. Originally constructed to serve local use, the site is now used as a primary access into the Bridger Wilderness. Use of this campground has more than doubled since it's construction in 1985 and visitation is expected to continue to grow. The Scab Creek Recreation Site currently receives high levels of use during the summer and fall.

Increased visitor use has caused conflict between a multitude of user groups sharing the existing campground and parking areas. Due to limited parking areas and corral space, visitors and animals often compete for the same space. This typically results in car campers camping with stock users and their animals, and small vehicles and large vehicles parking in undefined parking spaces within established parking areas. When parking areas are full, vehicles get randomly parked throughout the site where there is convenient space. Furthermore, the current parking facilities are undersized and inadequate for the size and number of vehicles that require parking, and there are no defined parking spaces within the parking areas.

These factors lead to resource damage associated with improper site use and user conflicts, resulting in a devalued recreation experience for all users. Uncontrolled movement of vehicles, including parking and turnaround movements, leads to degradation of the site through erosion coming off roads and parking areas and damage to vegetation. In addition, the uncontrolled movement of packstock users and horses can cause damage to trees and vegetation as well as create problems with waste.

Furthermore, existing site improvements, amenities, and spatial layouts are inadequate to accommodate the current and anticipated future use for this area. Existing spatial arrangements account for certain user conflicts and resource damage associated with improper site use. For example, holding facilities are needed to separate animal and human use areas and there is no developed water source which leads to horses, packstock and humans using water from the same source. Many of the existing improvements at the

site are outdated, do not meet accessibility requirements, are in poor condition, and need to be modified to protect the health and safety of the public.

Providing adequate and safe circulation throughout the site is a primary component of the plan. Current circulation includes the main access road to the site that terminates with a one way campground loop at the east end. This road is used by both small and large vehicles accessing the site. Consequently, large vehicles pulling trailers end up driving all the way through the site and making tight corners around the campground loop to return to the main access road. Large camp and horse trailers have also created safety hazards when vehicles meet on narrow roads and cannot pass. Visitors to the area are not always familiar with operating vehicles on single lane mountain roads with limited sight distance. Due to the narrow roads, one vehicle often has to “hit the ditch” to allow another vehicle to pass.

In addition, the proximity of adjacent elk feedground has been affecting the recreation resources of the campground. The elk do not remain in the feedground and frequently enter the campground area where they cause damage by browsing the vegetation and causing bark damage to trees.

The Scab Creek Recreation Site has been identified in the Pinedale RMP for management emphasis on maintaining or improving the quality of the site and the recreation experience and was identified for restoration during the mid-1990s through the BLM Deferred Maintenance Program. An estimated budget was established to fulfill the project objectives.

1.3 Coordination with Other Public Agencies

Several Federal, State, Local, and citizen-based agencies and groups participated with the BLM during the planning process for the Scab Creek Recreation Site. These entities included the USFS, Wyoming Game and Fish (WGF), Wyoming Back Country Horsemen (WYOBCH), and National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS). Of these, the USFS and WGF participated extensively on site throughout the data collection, analysis, and conceptual planning stages of the project. Conceptual design meetings were held at the site, during which attendees were able to participate in the conceptual design layouts of various site improvements. All of the participants in this process have extensive experience with the Scab Creek Recreation Site and its use.

During this process, USFS land managers contributed information regarding types of use, user numbers, adjacent lands, trails, and potential site layouts. Managers from the WGF contributed valuable information regarding the needs and seasonal operations of the elk feedground, which is located within the Scab Creek SRMA. Information regarding wildlife habitat, migration patterns, and hunting use of the area was also contributed by WGF.

Both WYOBCH and NOLS have members and students that utilize this area frequently. WYOBCH members are typically stock users, while NOLS uses the Scab Creek trailhead for providing supplies to NOLS wilderness programs and staging trips for educational and recreation purposes under USFS and BLM special use permit. Both of these groups have had an opportunity to review various development alternatives and submit written comments to the BLM.

In addition, an interagency agreement is being considered between the BLM and USFS for construction of new trails adjacent to the Scab Creek Recreation Site. This agreement would provide trail construction by trained Forest Service trail crews, which currently maintain the Scab Creek trail on USFS administered land.

1.4 Location and Setting

The Scab Creek project area is located in the foothills on the western slope of the Wind River Range in western Wyoming. The Scab Creek Recreation Site provides access to outstanding wilderness opportunities in the USFS-administered Bridger Wilderness and the BLM-administered Scab Creek WSA. The campground trailhead is one of nine trailheads providing access to the western slope of this range.

The land status surrounding the Scab Creek Recreation Site is varied. Adjacent to the Scab Creek SRMA on the north and east, is the USFS-administered Bridger-Teton National Forest. To the west and south is a patchwork of BLM, State, and private land. The main access road to the site crosses several areas of BLM-administered and private land. The Pinedale Field Office administers the BLM land within the region, while the Pinedale Ranger District administers the Forest Service land in the area.

The Scab Creek SRMA is located in a transition zone between the Green River Basin and Wind River Mountain physiographic regions. As a result, the elevation, topography, and climate of the area have a great deal of variety. Elevations within the SRMA range from 7200 feet in the southwest to 9500 feet in the northeast. The topography includes flat valleys, rolling hills, deep canyons, and steep mountains.

Scab Creek originates from the Toboggan Lakes area at an elevation of 9500 feet, flowing in a southwestern direction until joining Spring Creek, Silver Creek, and the New Fork River at elevation 7040 feet and eventually merging with the Green River. The Scab Creek Recreation Site is one of nine trailheads on the west side of the Wind River Mountains, which are oriented northwest-to-southeast.

The current vehicular circulation at the site includes the main access road into the site that terminates with a one way campground loop at the east end. This road is used by all vehicles, small and large, accessing the site. Consequently, large vehicles pulling trailers end up driving all the way through the site and making tight corners through the campground loop to return to the main access road. This typically causes conflicts for other users traveling through the site as well as car campers trying to enjoy their camping experience.

Currently there are nine developed campsites at the Scab Creek Recreation Site, and a handful of undeveloped campsites. During the summer and fall months the campground consistently reaches full capacity, which results in car campers and stock users camping adjacent to one another. This situation can and does lead to overcrowding and a poor recreation experience for some users. Furthermore, the current parking facilities are undersized and inadequate for the number and size of vehicles that require parking, and there are no defined parking spaces within the parking areas. There is only one double hole restroom facility that is out-dated, and a picnic table and fire pit at each of the designated campsites. Currently, none of the facilities meet accessibility requirements. Other existing

facilities include a trailhead, corrals, stock loading ramp and hitching rails. Common users of the area include backpackers, packstock users, dayhikers, campers, hunters, anglers, rock climbers, antler shed collectors and sightseers.

Vegetation

The climate is generally that of a high elevation desert, but also varies throughout the SRMA, especially with regards to precipitation. The lower elevations of the area may receive as little as 14 inches of precipitation per year, while the upper elevations may receive up to 30 inches per year, as a result of orographic lifting. This range of precipitation amounts is reflected in the vegetative communities throughout the area. Sagebrush ecosystems (*Artemisia spp.*) dominate the lower elevations with a mixture of Aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), Lodgepole Pine (*Pinus contorta*), Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), and Spruce (*Picea spp.*) occupying the upper elevation areas of the SRMA. In addition, the area also supports many species of woody shrubs, forbs, and grasses.

Wildlife

Throughout the Scab Creek SRMA, an abundance of wildlife is also supported. Two species identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as endangered may occur within the SRMA. There have been several reports of bald eagles in the area but there have been no nesting sites identified. The peregrine falcon has also been reported in the SRMA and nesting habitat exists in the large, rocky cliffs associated with lakes and small ponds. In addition to these two endangered species, the SRMA provides habitat for numerous game and non-game birds including sage grouse, blue grouse and ruffed grouse. Elk and mule deer use the SRMA for spring calving-fawning, with an average of 300 elk using the Scab Creek feedground during the winter. Additional wildlife that inhabit the SRMA include moose, black bears, bobcats, coyotes, mountain lions, snowshoe rabbits, badgers and possibly wolverines and Canadian lynx, which is "rare" in Wyoming. (Source: Scab Creek Wilderness Suitability and Environmental Impact Statement. USDI, 1980).

Recreation

Through collaboration with and data provided by the BLM and USFS, the major user groups of the Scab Creek Recreation Site have been identified. User groups fall into two general groups: recreational users and hunters.

There is a wide range of recreational opportunities and attractions within the vicinity of the SRMA such as fishing and boating on nearby rivers, including the Green River and New Fork River, camping, horseback riding, mountain biking (including the Great Divide Mountain Biking Trail), picnicking, and hiking.

During the late summer and fall, many people visit the public lands of the area for hunting. The Scab Creek Recreation Site receives particularly heavy hunting use in the early fall when elk and deer begin to migrate from the high country into the area. Day use hunting increases substantially as elk begin migrating to the feedground and nearby ranchland pastures.

As discussed previously, wilderness opportunities are abundant and popular in the adjacent Bridger Wilderness, of which the Scab Creek Recreation Site is one of the main access points. The Bridger Wilderness of the Wind River Range receives high use and backcountry

trails such as the Scab Creek trail offer access to the Wind River Mountain Range and Bridger Wilderness.

The BLM Pinedale Field Office provides recreation opportunities at many developed sites throughout the area, including three campgrounds, one day use site, ten river access/campsites located in the Green River Recreation Management Area and numerous other river and lake access sites. The USFS Pinedale Ranger District also manages 11 campgrounds adjacent to the Wind River Range.

In addition, several large lakes provide recreational attractions on BLM and USFS administered land to the north and east of Pinedale. These include New Fork Lake, Willow Lake, Fremont Lake, Half Moon Lake, Burnt Lake, Boulder Lake, and Soda Lake. These lakes are primarily located northwest of the Scab Creek SRMA, following the foothills of the Wind River Range.

Numerous historical sites and the Oregon Trail offer visitors unique experiences and information regarding the prehistoric and historic exploration and settlement of the area. The mountain man fur trapping and rendezvous era is well interpreted at the Museum of the Mountain Man located in Pinedale.

Winter recreation in the local area includes cross country and backcountry skiing, downhill skiing at White Pine Ski Area, snowshoeing, snowmobiling (including the Continental Divide Snowmobile Trail), ice fishing, dog sledding, and other winter activities. The public land surrounding Pinedale are well known for year-round recreational opportunities.

Other recreational opportunities and attractions in the greater regional context include Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area, Fontenelle Reservoir, Seedskaadee National Wildlife Refuge, Fossil Butte National Monument, the Wyoming Mountain Range, Snake River Canyon, Jackson Hole Mountain Resort, Snow King Resort, National Elk Refuge, Grand Teton National Park, and Yellowstone National Park.

Access

The primary access route to the Scab Creek Recreation Site is via Highway 191, which traverses the Green River Basin in a north-south orientation from Rock Springs to Pinedale. From Highway 191 at the town of Boulder, Wyoming Highway 353 travels east 6.2 miles to the turnoff at Scab Creek access road, BLM #5423. This BLM-maintained road travels east, then north, and then east for 8.5 miles to the Scab Creek Recreation Site.

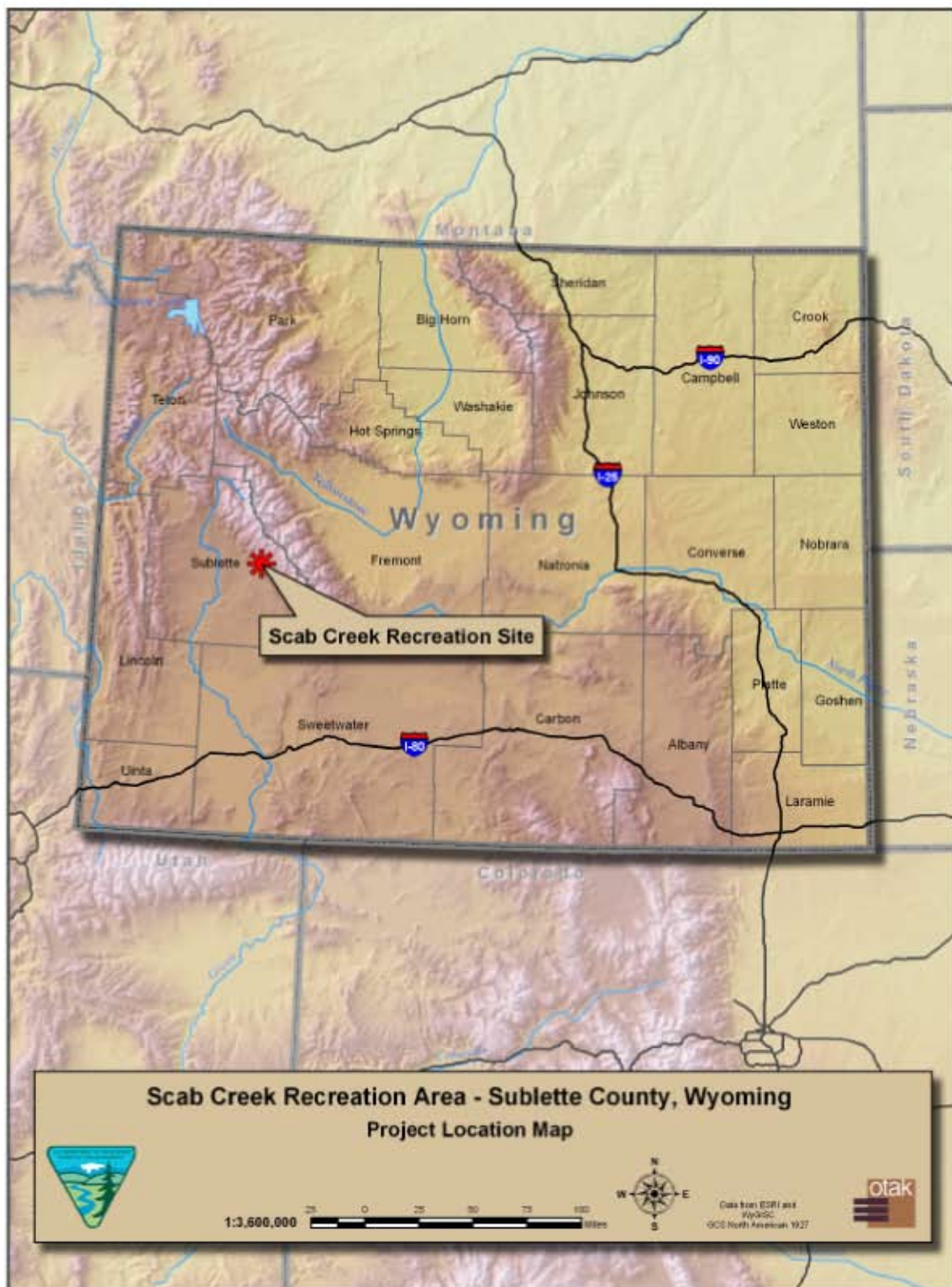
A secondary approach provides access to BLM #5423 from South Pass and Big Sandy. This route utilizes Sublette County roads 118 and 132 to reach Wyoming Highway 353, and approaches BLM #5423 from the south. This approach is less straightforward, and may be impassible during certain times of the year depending upon conditions.

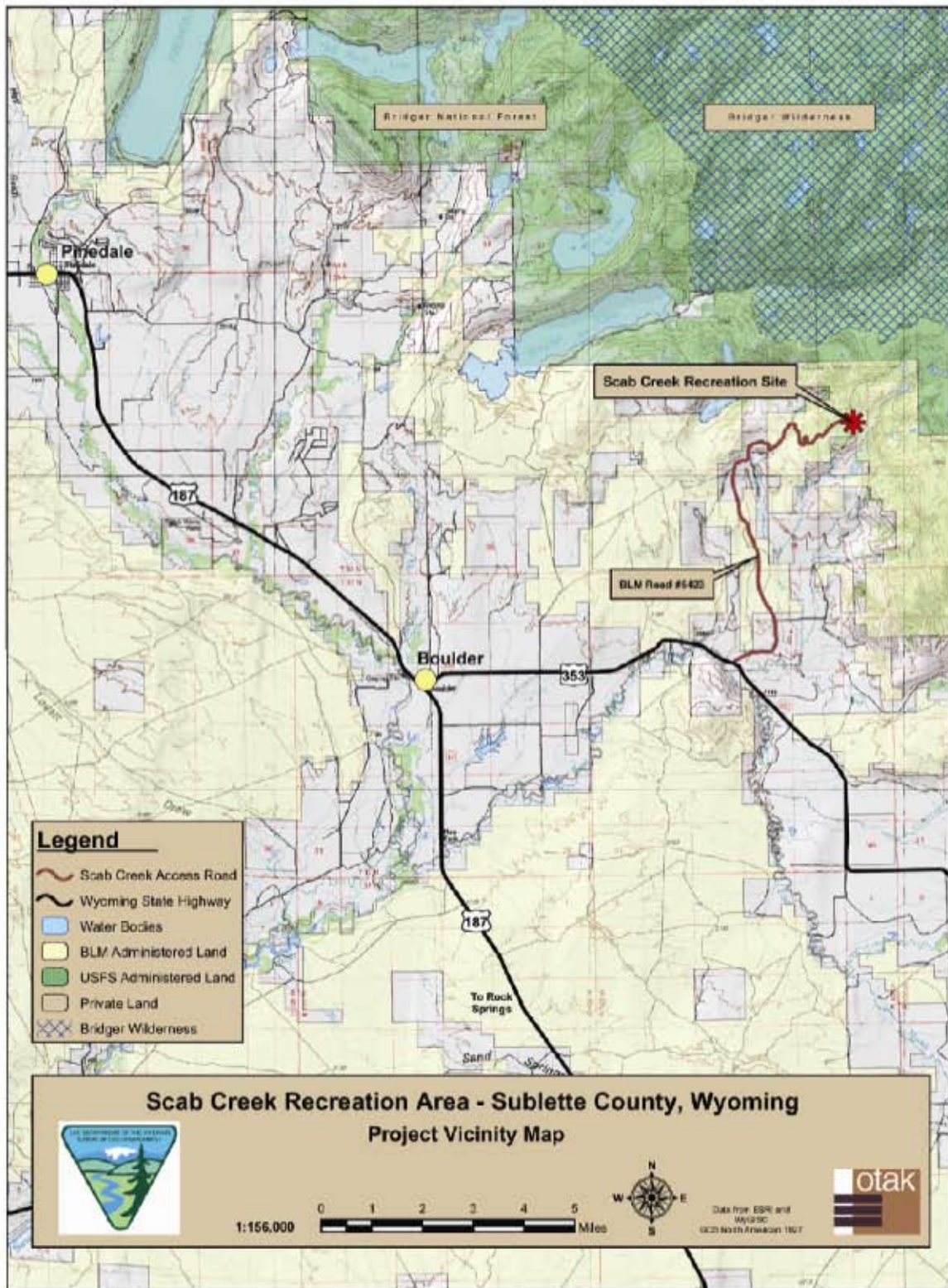
The Scab Creek access road, BLM #5423, is maintained by the BLM for the benefit of recreation land, range, and wildlife resources. The road is generally known as one of the better access roads to the west side of the Wind River Range. The relatively high quality of the road has led to regular use by large vehicles and vehicles towing trailers, in addition to average-sized vehicles and sedans. The road is closed near the SRMA on an annual basis

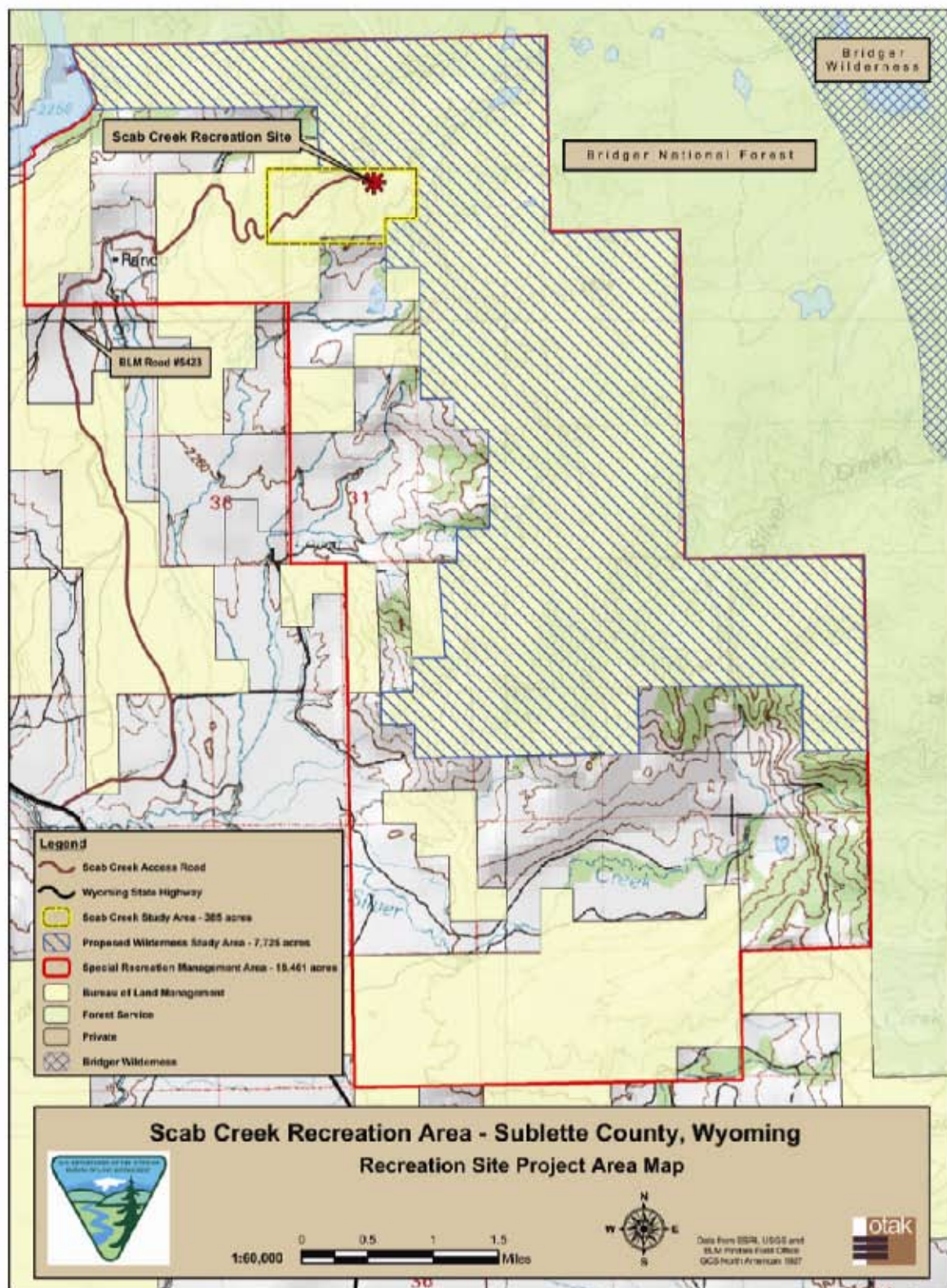
from November 15 through April 30. The WGF manages this closure for the undisturbed operation of the Scab Creek elk feedground.

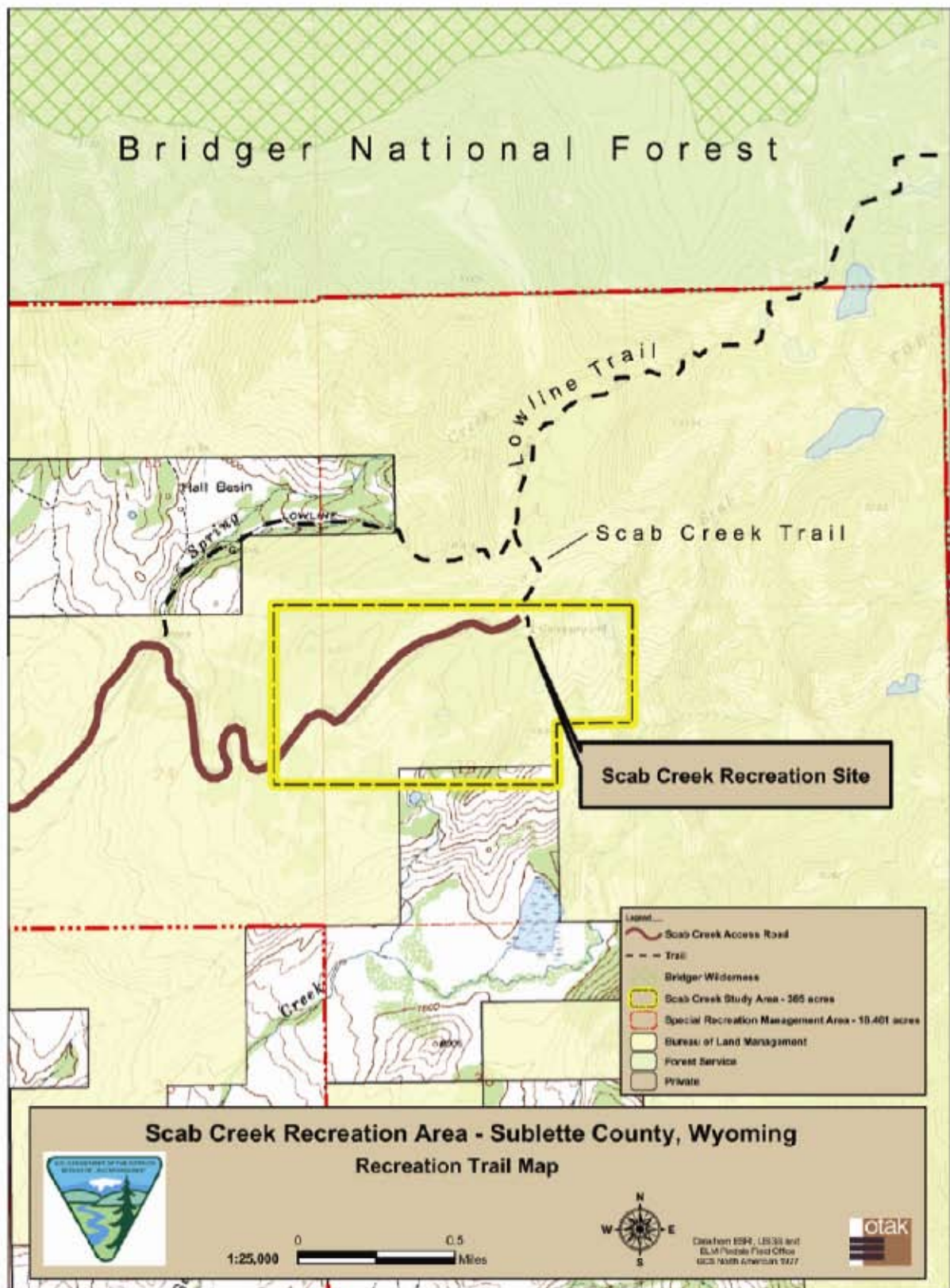
Distances from population centers.

| City/ Place | Distance To SRMA (miles) | Population |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Boulder, WY | 15 | 30 |
| Pinedale, WY | 27 | 1500 |
| Jackson, WY | 104 | 9000 |
| Rock Springs, WY | 106 | 19,000 |
| Grand Teton National Park, WY | 117 | -- |
| Yellowstone National Park, WY | 159 | -- |
| Idaho Falls, ID | 188 | 51,000 |
| Evanston, WY | 202 | 11,000 |
| Pocatello, ID | 236 | 52,000 |
| Casper, WY | 279 | 50,000 |
| Salt Lake City, UT | 283 | 904,000 (metro area) |
| Cheyenne, WY | 360 | 53,000 |
| Denver, CO | 423 | 2.6 Million (metro area) |









2.0 Data Analysis Summarization

2.1 Social Data Analysis Summary

There are currently several types of recreational use that occur at the Scab Creek Recreation Site, with recreational users and hunters being the two general user groups. Typical users of the Scab Creek Recreation Site include backpackers, packstock users, dayhikers, campers, hunters, anglers, rock climbers, antler shed collectors, and sightseers. Furthermore, the campground trailhead provides wilderness access for several commercial hunting outfitters operating under federal permits. It is anticipated that following completion of the project there will be an increase in camping and overnight use, as well as an increase in the total number of users.

Over the past 10 years, annual visitation to the Bridger Wilderness has varied from approximately 30,000 visitors in 2000 to 19,000 in 2004. Peak use within the Bridger Wilderness occurs during the months of July and August, when most of the wilderness is free of snow. At this time, there is limited data available regarding the current number of users at the site. However, the Forest Service has been able to collect some trail use data for the Scab Creek Trailhead, one of eight developed trailheads providing access to the Bridger Wilderness along the Pinedale front. Approximately 4 to 7% of the Bridger Wilderness visitors enter the wilderness via the Scab Creek Trailhead annually. Over 80% of these visitors come from out of state, with an additional 3% from outside the continental United States.

The user group with the most specialized requirements are stock users. They often arrive in large vehicles with trailers that require large parking areas, adequate room for turnaround movement, and space for loading and unloading. This user group also has specialized needs in the form of stock staging areas, hitching rails, horse corrals, and water sources. These spatial requirements are currently not being met at the site. The heaviest period of use for this group is during the fall hunting seasons, although substantial and consistent use occurs during the summer months as well.

Car campers also have specific requirements at the site. These users typically require amenities such as parking, picnic tables, fire rings, tent pads, toilets, potable water, accessibility, and relative solitude. The majority of these needs are currently being met, however most of the existing facilities are out dated and in poor repair. There is currently no potable water at the site, and the existing campsite amenities do not meet accessibility requirements, including the existing restroom facility, which is also out dated. Additionally, the existing campsites are clustered tightly together, thereby minimizing the quality of experience. The primary season of use for car campers is typically mid-summer through the fall.

Backpackers and day hikers use the recreation site consistently throughout the summer months. They typically park their vehicles from a day to several weeks, creating a need for safe and ample long-term parking. This user group also requires a restroom facility, display for trail maps and regulations, and gear preparation areas. There is an existing parking area and kiosk for hikers at the site, however there is no toilet or gear preparation area. Additionally, the existing parking area is inadequate for the large numbers of hikers who

park their vehicles in the same parking facility with the livestock vehicles. The main season of use for hikers and backpackers is in the summer months, typically after the snow has melted from much of the high country.

Additionally, the area is utilized by hunters, mostly big game, from the beginning of hunting season in late summer until the main access road closes sometime in mid-November. Hunters can be broken down into two groups: those that access the wilderness with packstock animals or by foot, and those that hunt the area during the day with a vehicle or OHV. Typically, packstock hunters that use the Scab Creek Recreation Site move on to popular areas within the Bridger Wilderness and have similar needs as other packstock users.

Hunters that typically use the area during the day commonly travel into and out of the site and are attracted by the easy vehicular access to the campground as well as the adjacent elk feedgrounds. Hunters that use OHV's for hunting or to retrieve game are limited to localized use due to the steep topography and difficult terrain. They primarily use their OHV's, such as ATVs, to access a trailhead and then continue the rest of the way on foot. Most hunters staying within the localized area use walking as their primary means of travel.

Other site users include anglers, sightseers, rock climbers, antler shed collectors, small game hunters and people visiting the site for other activities such as picnicking. Anglers have similar needs as day hikers and backpackers, as they typically park a vehicle and hike to reach fishing destinations. Sightseers of the area may travel the main campground access road by car or trails by foot. Additional casual users account for a small percentage of the overall users, as the Scab Creek Recreation Site is primarily a destination in which people make plans ahead to recreate.

During the peak of the recreation season, the Scab Creek Recreation Site experiences a mix of user groups sharing the existing campground and parking areas. This typically results in car campers sharing camping areas with stock users and their animals as well as small vehicles and large vehicles parking in undefined parking spaces within the established parking areas. When these areas are full vehicles get randomly parked throughout the site where there is convenient space. The current spatial layout and design of the site falls short of providing adequate separation of user groups and defined parking spaces which can lead to a devalued experience for all users. In addition, the site amenities do not meet current accessibility standards. Therefore, improvements at the Scab Creek Recreation Site are necessary to provide a positive recreation experience for all users that visit the site.

2.2 Physical Resource Data Summary

Natural resources within the project study area are abundant. Due to the broad elevation range within the area, there are many different ecosystem types. Large sage meadows comprise the western portion of the project study area, where the elk feedground is located. Mature aspen and mixed conifer forests dominate the central and southern sections of the project study area, while lodgepole pine forests cover the majority of the northern section. In the eastern portion surrounding the existing campground, Douglas fir, lodgepole pine and aspen dominate the landscape.

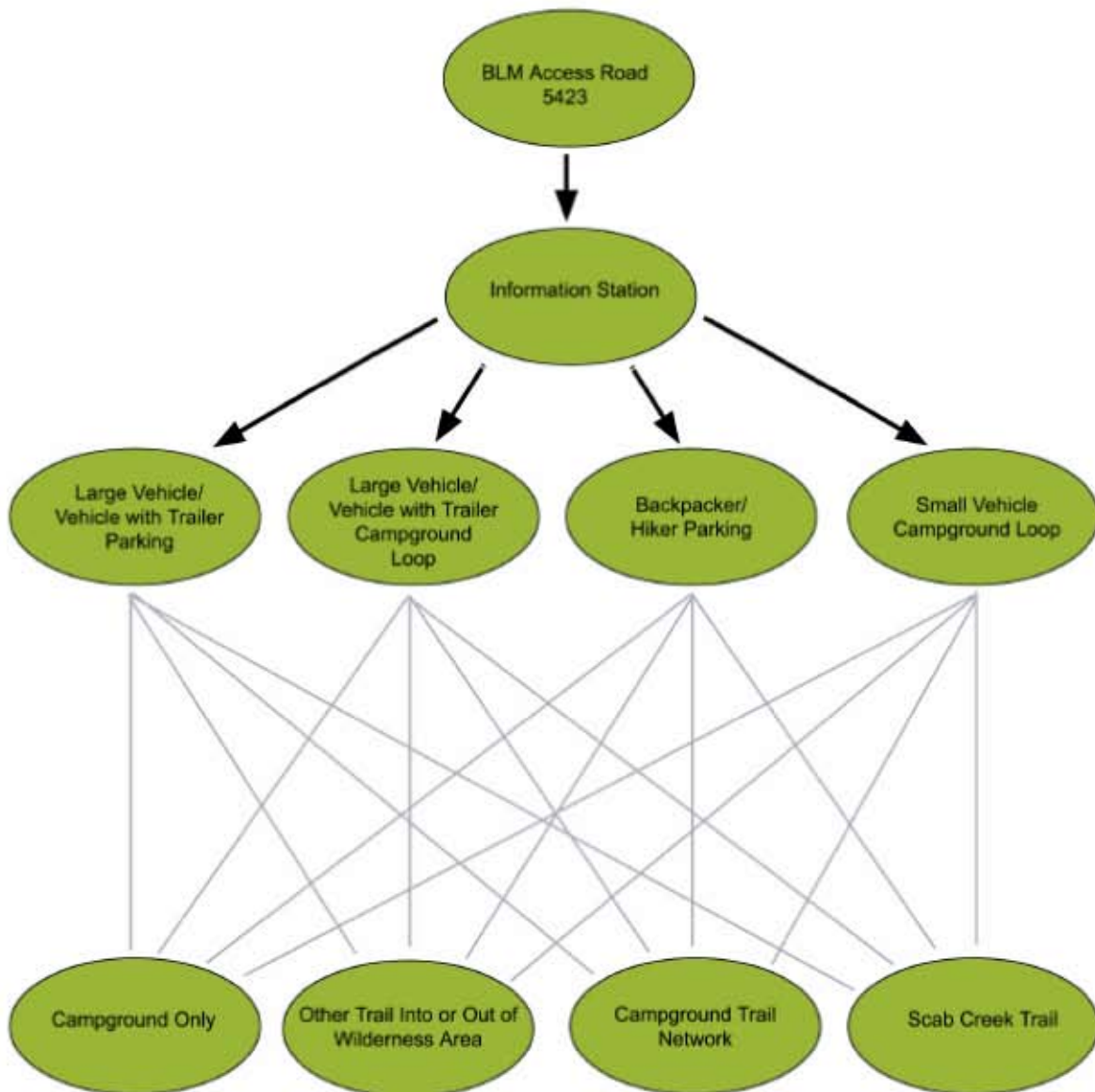
Views within and from the project study area are plentiful, especially in the eastern portion of the site. The wide-open sage meadows and elevated topography provide views of the Wind River Range foothills, as well as distant views to the west into the Upper Green River Basin and Wyoming Range. As visitors approach the project study area from the main campground access road views to the east of the existing campground area, foothills and ridges are expansive.

| Man-Made Elements | | |
|---|-------------------|---|
| Element | Quantity | Condition |
| Gravel Roads | 1.25 miles | Generally fair to good |
| Toilets | 1 | Poor condition, outdated, non-accessible |
| Campsites (parking, table, and fire ring typical) | 9 | Wood tables, concrete and steel fire pits are generally in fair to poor condition |
| Stock Corrals | 3 | Fair condition, wood construction |
| Hitching Rails | 4 | Fair condition, wood construction |
| Trailhead Parking Area | Approx. 10 Spaces | Fair condition |
| Signs | ? | Generally good |

2.3 Functional Relationship Analysis Summary

Through collaboration with and data provided by the BLM and USFS, the major user groups of the Scab Creek Recreation Site have been identified and fall into two general groups: recreational users and hunters. As previously discussed, the most common uses of the site by these user groups include, but are not limited to camping, hiking, backpacking, packstock users, hunting, OHV riding, fishing, rock climbing, antler shed collecting and sightseeing. The current spatial layout of the site is not suited to handle all of the current uses efficiently, and it is anticipated that following construction the number of users will increase. The following Functional Relationship Diagram is provided to illustrate the major user group requirements, which will provide a much more positive experience to the users.

Scab Creek Recreation Site Functional Relationship Diagram



3.0 Project Plan Concept and Design Parameters - Preferred Alternative

3.1 Project Plan Concept

Due to the popularity of the site and its location within the Wind River Range, it is anticipated that the use of the site will increase following the construction of the site improvements. It is the intent of this Recreation Project Plan (RPP) to provide the public users with safe and adequate circulation, sufficient parking and a high quality recreation experience. Full build-out of the preferred alternative will accommodate existing and anticipated users, while providing the appropriate facilities and amenities necessary for each user group.

Recreation Experience

In the federal Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS), the level of development described in this plan is classified as "R" for "Rural". Several items contribute to a classification of this nature:

- the site provides the opportunity to observe and affiliate with other users;
- the natural environment is culturally modified yet remains attractive;
- interactions between users may be high;
- there are obvious and prevalent on-site controls, and;
- access and travel facilities are designed for individual motorized use.

The site does not qualify as Primitive since those areas are characterized by an essentially unmodified natural environment of fairly large size. Evidence of other user would be minimal and interaction between users would be low, with the area managed to be essentially free from evidence of human-induced restriction and controls. Motorized use within the area would also not be allowed.

Currently, existing spatial arrangements at the site do not lend themselves to creating a positive recreation experience. Conflicts arise during busy portions of the recreation season between visitors with horses and packstock users and those without. The proposed improvements would provide separation between user groups to improve the recreational experience for users of the site. Separation would be created by placing staging areas away from campers, keeping large vehicles in the western part of the site with trail access and car camping facilities provided in the central and western areas. Existing user groups will also be better accommodated by increasing the distance between camp sites and upgrading site facilities to meet current accessibility and health standards.

3.2 Project Plan Design Parameters

Entrance Information Station

A new information station would be located at a vehicle pull out at the entrance to the Recreation Site. The station would provide directions, maps, rules, and regulation for the use of the area.

Truck and Trailer/Livestock Parking Area

The truck and trailer/livestock parking area is located at the west end of the site, northeast of the elk feedground. A trailer and large vehicle trailhead would provide parking for 14 large vehicles and 19 accessory vehicles. This area would provide amenities for stock users such as holding corrals and hitching posts as well as a registration station. A one stall vault toilet would also be added to this area.

Large Vehicle/Livestock Campground Loop

A large vehicle campground would be developed in the lodgepole forest on the north side of Scab Creek Road at the western end of the site. This would provide ten campsites to be utilized by stockmen and RV users. Campground facilities would include a registration area with maps, three shared holding corrals, and a two stall vault toilet as well as tables and fire pits at each campsite. This layout keeps large vehicles in the western area of the site to reduce user conflicts with small vehicle campers and backpackers.

A vehicle turn-around would be developed adjacent to the large vehicle campground loop to eliminate the need for large vehicles to travel all the way through the campground loop. The development of a large vehicle turn-around adjacent to the large vehicle campground loop will eliminate the need for large vehicles to travel through the site. Large vehicles would be discouraged from traveling past the large vehicle campground. In the event large vehicles travel through the site to the east end, a proposed vehicle turn-around will provide an opportunity to turn around instead of traveling through the small vehicle campground.

Backpacker Trailhead Parking and Staging Area

The existing Scab Creek trailhead drop-off area would be improved to increase available parking at the trailhead. A one-way parking area with 16 spaces would be provided. A registration station for the Bridger Wilderness and a vehicle barrier would be added to the north side of the parking area.

The area directly across the road from the trailhead parking area would be expanded to accommodate additional users. A one-way parking area with spaces for eight vehicles would be provided as well as a drop off area for busses and large vehicles. A backpack assembly area would be adjacent to the drop off area. Additional facilities at the parking area include trail information and maps and a single stall vault toilet. Signage would be added to the driveway entrances to direct traffic flow.

This area would also serve as a “last chance” vehicle turn-around for vehicles with trailers. By utilizing both halves of the parking areas, large vehicles would be able to maneuver around the one-way loop through the parking areas to turn their vehicles around.

Small Vehicle Campground Loop

Currently there are nine developed campsites at the Scab Creek Recreation site, and a handful of undeveloped campsites. During the summer and fall months the campground consistently reaches full capacity, resulting in car campers and stock users camping adjacent to one another. This situation can and does lead to overcrowding and a poor recreation experience for some users. Furthermore, the current parking facilities are undersized and inadequate for the size and number of vehicles that require parking, and there are no defined parking spaces within the parking areas. The proposed plan addresses these capacity issues by improving and increasing the number of designated campsites to 13 at the eastern end of the site for car campers.

An extended small vehicle campground loop road is proposed where the existing campground is located. This will provide a one way route through the campsites and will be accessed from the main road mid-way through the site, as opposed to the current access at the east end of the site. The campsites will be spread out along the loop road which will reduce the number of vehicles in close proximity to one another. Proposed amenities for the small vehicle campground include tables and fire pits at the camp sites and a two stall vault toilet.

Within the small vehicle campground loop there are two proposed group camping areas. Small group camping for two to four vehicles is located at the southern tip of the loop road. Due to the constrained site, parking will be provided off the loop road with access to the site by trail (bollards will be provided to restrict vehicular access). A second space for organized group camping is located within the center area of the loop and is accessed from a pull through spot. This area would be able to accommodate a large group or separate, smaller groups.

Three walk in sites with tables and fire rings area proposed south of the small vehicle campground loop. Parking for the walk in sites is provided off the small vehicle campground loop with a trail connection to the sites (bollards will be provided to restrict vehicular access). Fire rings and picnic tables are provided at each site. This area provides the option of expanding walk-in camping opportunities at a later date if necessary.

Other improvements for the Small Vehicle Campground Loop include:

- A livestock fence is proposed to extend around the small vehicle campground loop and host site. The fence is to help keep animals from grazing allotments out of the campground.
- A fireside chat area is proposed to be located just south of the trailhead overflow parking area.
- A host camp site with parking spot would be created where the existing packstock staging area currently is. The existing corral area and access road would be reclaimed.
- The existing trailhead adjacent to the existing packstock staging area would be used for trailhead overflow parking. The parking area would include nine parking spaces as well as three oversized parking spaces and a backpack

assembly area. This area would also serve as parking for people accessing the Fireside Chat Area, where a trail would connect users from the parking to the fireside chat area.

Trail System

There are two miles of developed trail (Scab Creek Trail) and four miles of undeveloped trail (Scab Lake Trail) in the area. There has been an increase in trail riding and packstock use, both for local use within the project area as well as people using the trail system to access the Bridger Wilderness. Trails are heavily used from late summer through mid-November.

The Scab Creek trail is signed and begins in the parking area and crosses BLM land into the Bridger Wilderness where it joins the Bridger Wilderness trail system. This trail is a steep uphill climb with switchbacks for the first portion. The Scab Lake Trail is not signed and begins in the small vehicle campground where it crosses BLM land to the south and turns east into the Bridger Wilderness and Monroe Lake.

Two new trails are proposed that would provide stock users with connections between the large vehicle parking area, the large vehicle campground area and the existing Scab Creek Trail and the Scab Lake Trail. This would provide a separate initial trail system for stock users and hikers, reducing the potential for conflict between the different user groups. Additional trails are proposed to provide connections with the Backpacker trailhead to the Scab Lake Trail. Internal trails are also provided for access from the small vehicle campground loop to the Scab Lake Trail Scab Creek Trail. A trailhead kiosk with maps and information will be developed at the Scab Lake Trailhead.

Water System

Currently, there is no developed water at the site. Water sources are proposed for the following locations within the campground:

- Large Vehicle/Livestock Campground Loop
- Backpacker Trailhead Parking
- Small Vehicle Campground
- Host Camp Site

With no developed water, horses and humans often collect water from the same water source which can lead to health issues. Users must either pack water in or rely on an existing water source and a personal water filtration system to treat the water. Adding reliable water sources in close proximity to the various user group areas will improve their recreation experience. Water wells will be attempted at the site but may only test out for livestock use. In addition, it may be difficult to get water to the western part of the site.

4.0 Project Development Overview

4.1 Required Administrative Actions

This project is scheduled to go under construction during the fall of 2006. Several tasks need to be accomplished in a timely manner for this to take place:

- Engage BLM geologists and engineers in final design of potable water system
- Engage BLM engineers in any necessary construction documents
- Develop partnership with WYOBCH for construction of stock facilities
- Develop partnership with USFS Pinedale Ranger District for construction of trails and user information.

A timber sale of beetle-kill conifers adjacent to the existing campground area may be scheduled to occur in the summer of 2006. Although a separate activity from the planned campground improvements, the tree sale may have an impact on planned tree removal for new roads and camp sites. Effort should be made to coordinate the timing of the two projects to reduce conflicts.

4.2 Required Interim Use Supervision

Prior to the initiation of the improvements in the project area, the BLM should continue the current management program for the area. Upon the implementation of the development, an ongoing monitoring system should be established in order to assess visitor use and satisfaction. This monitoring may include traffic counts, user surveys, and user counts conducted by BLM or Forest Service staff. Future management of the area may be based on post-project implementation user surveys.

4.3 Project Development Phasing Outline

The project development has been organized in three phases, all to occur during a short timeframe in 2006, although some development may be phased. Survey and design elements for all phases should be complete or near completion at the start of construction in late fall 2006 and spring 2007.

4.4 Project Development Schedule Outline

Construction Phasing: Phase, Timeframe and Major Tasks

Phase 1

Late Summer 2006

- Conduct timber harvest for creation of new roadways, parking areas, campsites, restroom facilities and stock facilities

- Stockpile harvested timber in a manner that promotes adequate seasoning and supportive stacking techniques.

Phase 2

Fall 2006

- Heavy equipment operations of clearing, grubbing, cutting and filling, and rough grading for all new roadways, parking areas, campsites, restroom facilities and stock facilities
- Stockpile of boulders unearthed and removed during heavy equipment operations
- Strategic placement of boulders using an excavator with a hydraulic thumb

Phase 3

Fall 2006 or Spring 2007

- Completion of all roadway and parking area surfacing
- Construction of all signs and new trails through collaboration with the Forest Service
- Installation of restroom facilities, campground facilities and stock facilities
- Construction of water system
- Construct and install additional site amenities per the preferred plan and design details

4.5 Recommended Method of Project Survey, Design and Construction

In 2002, a small portion of the Scab Creek SRMA was flown for an aerial survey. The resulting products were a high-quality digital image, digitized CAD layers of existing area improvements, and two foot contours generated from the flight. However, the aerial extent of this survey did not provide coverage of the entire Recreation Site. The survey generally covered the area including and surrounding the currently developed campground, and extending to the west toward the elk feedground.

The plan includes developed areas within and outside of this aerial survey. As a result, an additional aerial image with 1-meter pixels was spliced together with the more recent photograph to analyze and display the complete development area.

In order for accurate construction drawings and material quantity estimates to be produced, some additional areas will need to be surveyed. These additional areas are generally located on the west side of the Recreation Site, near the elk feedground on the north and south sides of the main access road. It is recommended that these areas be surveyed utilizing survey-grade Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment to generate accurate topographical data that can be utilized to produce two foot or one foot contours in a

digital CAD format. The resulting data could then be used to generate an accurate grading plan and material quantity estimates for improvements.

The designs that are included in this Recreation Plan were developed to be used for field layout and construction. Some design detail items may require further development, as necessitated by the BLM project managers. The preferred site plan included in this document was created utilizing GPS technology on site, by walking the various alignments and locations of all proposed improvements, and recording this information in GPS/Geographical Information System (GIS) format.



The improvement locations identified on the plan are considered accurate to within one meter. This level of accuracy is sufficient to allow field crews to accurately lay out site improvements, while making proper accommodations for preserving existing site features such as notable trees and rock outcrops.

In addition to this report and drawings, GIS data has been provided to the BLM in digital format for use in the layout of plan improvements in the field. This data can be downloaded to a GPS unit and used for the construction staking of improvements, including road alignments, sign locations, parking areas, toilet locations, campsite locations, and trails. As mentioned above, some of the preferred improvements may require some minor adjustment

in the field to achieve the most beneficial locations, while preserving the natural attributes of the site. This GPS data will provide the most cost-effective, accurate, and efficient means of performing the construction staking.

The field layout and construction staking should be performed and managed by BLM Landscape Architects, Engineers, and Recreation Planners. By utilizing these resources, the BLM will receive the most functional and aesthetic layout, with respect to the preservation of natural resources in this VRM Class II area. Utilizing these professionals will provide a quality layout with consideration to grading, drainages, vegetation, terrain, visual resources, and experiential site qualities.

Construction activities can be described as three distinct phases. The first phase should include the timber removal that will be required for the creation of new roads, parking areas, campsites, toilet sites, and stock facilities.

The second phase of construction should include the heavy equipment operations of clearing, grubbing, cutting, filling, and rough grading for all new roadways, parking areas, toilets, and campsites. This will also involve the stockpiling and placement of boulders as structural and design elements per the plan and details. It is anticipated that many large and small boulders will be unearthed, due to the geologic composition of the site. These boulders should be utilized on site for construction, thereby saving potential removal and transport costs.

The third phase of construction should include the remainder of the site improvements and amenities. During this phase, all roadway and parking surfacing should be completed, the water system installed, toilets installed, signs constructed, trails constructed, camping facilities installed, stock facilities installed, and other site amenities constructed and installed per the preferred plan and details.

Some of the proposed site amenities could be constructed from harvested timber from the site. If the timber were to be used, it would need to be stockpiled on site in a manner that promotes adequate seasoning and supportive stacking techniques. The timber would also need to be peeled and preserved for use in the construction of these amenities. However, it is not always feasible to salvage the timber or it may end up more costly to try to separate the timber during harvesting. Also, the labor costs for peeling and preserving the timber needs to be taken into account. The quality of the salvaged timber may also not be adequate for construction purposes. The option of salvaging the timber needs to be discussed with the timber operator prior harvesting the trees.

The BLM should also work collaboratively with the Forest Service in the construction of proposed trails within the Recreation Site. The BLM should actively seek the assistance of experienced Forest Service trail crews for the site layout and construction of these new trails.

5.0 Preliminary Project Cost Estimate

Currently being revised